Numb 162.

The Female Tatler.

Written by a Society of Ladies.

Deprendi turpe eſt Cupienti Caſta videri.

From Wedneſday March 8, to Friday March 16, 1710.

Lucinda's Day.

From my CLOSET.

EPHELIA was well Shaped, Agreeable, and the Heireſs to a plentiful Eſtate; many ſuitable Matches had offer'd, and ſome of them very Advantageous: But *Ephelia* is Deaf to all Courtſhip, will hearken to no Propoſals of Matrimony, and is thought by every body to have vow'd Perpetual Virginity: No Young Lady of her Years, which hardly exceeded Twenty, ſeem'd ever more Cold and ſtrictly Virtuous, or a greater and more implacable Enemy to Vice and Wantonneſs than herſelf; always obſerv'd in her Practice as carefully to avoid the Company of Men, as in her Principles ſhe profeſs'd to hate them. *Clotilda* her Cozen, who was Two Years Younger, and a Lady of Incomparable Beauty, had been brought up with her almoſt from her Infancy. *Henrietta*, the Mother of *Ephelia*, having taken Care of the Education of her Niece as well as her Daughter, lived in the Company of both at a pleaſant Convenient Seat, within a few Miles of a large Town in the Country. *Clotilda*, who was very Gay and good Humour'd, and much leſs reſerv'd than her Cozen, wou'd have been Married long ago, if her Aunt, upon whom ſhe only depended, would have conſented to it. But the Auſtere *Ephelia*, always carping at her Cozen's Behaviour, and *Henrietta* wrapt up in the ſevere Sentiments of her Cenſorous Daughter, found ſo much difficulty and ſpied ſo many faults in every Gallant that was proffer'd, that Poor *Clotilda* began to be afraid She ſhould remain Single as well as her Cozen. Among the many Suitors that in vain aſſaulted the unmoveable *Ephelia*, none was ſo conſtant as the Rich and Noble *Amintor*, who, whilſt others were only in Love with her Eſtate, doated altogether on her Perſon, and the extraordinary Virtue ſhe was poſſeſs'd of. *Decio*, the Boſom Friend of *Amintor*, more ſucceſsfully Courted the beautiful *Clotilda*; he lov'd, and in a ſhort time was belov'd again: So favourable were his Circumſtances and ſo irreſiſtable his Addreſs, that ſolving all the Objections that were made by the Aunt, and removing all the Impediments laid in the way by the Couſin, he obtained *Henrietta*'s Conſent; *Decio* and *Clotilda* one Morning are Married; every thing was Tranſacted in great Privacy, and only a very few Friends, among which *Amintor* was one, were invited to the Wedding; to make great Rejoyceings at a Solemnity like this, was contrary to the ſtrict Reſervedneſs of the Modeſt *Ephelia*, who now govern'd the whole Family; ſhe always wore a ſolid look, but at this Day her Countenance was more than ordinarily Grave, and an awful Severity ſat commanding on her Brow, as if ſhe would have ſhewn that her Chaſtity was offended at her remaining under the ſame Roof where a Man and a Woman were to lye together. How ſtrangely is *Amintor* diſcompoſed at the Marks of ſuch uncommon Virtue? For as it encreaſes his Love, ſo it heightens his Deſpair: Now *Decio* ſhall ſhortly be in Poſſeſſion of his lovely and conſenting Fair, but what can *Amintor* expect of the rigid Coldneſs of *Ephelia*.

Dinner was over, and the Charming *Clotilda* going up for ſomething to her Chamber, is unexpectedly followed by *Decio*; the bluſhing Bride trembles to ſee him enter the Room, and making what haſte ſhe could to puſh him out, in a ſweet complaining Tone chides his Preſumption, calls him Indiſcreet; and if ſhe had been ſtrong enough would have obliged him to retire. But *Decio* tenderly embracing the ſtrugling Fair, Smiles at her weak Endeavours, and with repeated Evaſions ſtifles the interrupted Expreſſions of her ſeeming Diſpleaſure; till his Paſſion growing Ungovernable and himſelf impatient of delay he claims a Husbands right, and Deaf to all Entreaties, refuſes to defer his Joys. *Ephelia*, whoſe exceeding Nicety as well as Centures, had been always very troubleſome to *Clotilda*, miſſing both the Bridegroom and her Couſin, goes to look for them in the Garden, and not finding them there, runs up in a great Hurry and ruſhes to her Chamber; but whether *Decio* in the eagerneſs of his Love had forgot to lock the Door, or that *Ephelia* in her Zeal of Chaſtity broke it open, I know not, but kept back by no Reſiſtance, without the leaſt warning ſhe ſurprizes the Lovers in the moſt Indecent Poſture; She ſhrieks out, and diffuſive in Reproaches, would have run back immediately, when her Cozen full of Shame and Confuſion, throwing herſelf from the Bed at her Feet, Embraces her Knees, and with Tears and Fervency, conjures not to expoſe her, and render her Ridiculous for ever: But *Ephelia* exclaiming againſt ſuch Monſters, as ſhe call'd 'em, of Uncleanneſs, inexorable, breaks from her, and is ſo loud in her Invectives, that before ſhe was come down Stairs, ſhe had made the Houſe ring of what her Cozen had ſo earneſtly beg'd of her to conceal. With what Face ſhall *Clotilda* ſpeak to her Aunt, or ever look upon any of the Company? She refuſes to go down again before ſhe left the Houſe for altogether; in vain would *Decio* have dried up her Tears, all his Rhetorick and Submiſſive Tenderneſs are not able to appeaſe her, and the baſhful *Clotilda*, as if ſhe had been taken in the moſt heinous Crime, is Inconſolable.

Whilſt

Whilst this was doing within Doors, the Love-sick *Amintor* bewailing the Rigour and Insensibility as much as he adored the Virtue of *Ephelia*, entertain'd his own Melancholy Thoughts in the Garden; Coming back from the upper end of it, he was accosted by a Sturdy Weather-beaten Fellow, one *Damas*, *Henrietta's*, Gardiner, that had lived with her several Years, who smilingly ask'd him, *What he would give to be made as Happy that Night with* Ephelia *as* Decio *was like to be with* Clotilda. *Amintor* wondring at his Impudence, gives him no other return than his Silence and Contempt; but the bold Ruffick assuming a more serious Countenance, tells him, *That he had named nothing but what was in his Power to grant, and with that proffers to reveal him a most important Secret.* *Amintor* full of Amazement and Expectation, looking steadfastly upon him, bids him proceed; and *Damas* —— But O! Ye Heaven, and Earth, and Ye Seas of *Neptune*, is it possible that *Ephelia* should be the Prostitute of a Treacherous Clown! The first Discovery would have cost him his Life, had the Incens'd *Amintor* had a Weapon by his Side: But having first Raved a while, then call'd him a Thousand lying Villains, and threatned him as many Deaths, at last he grows Calm. *Damas* persisting in what he had said, asserted with terrible Oaths, *That his Commerce with* Ephelia *was now of above Three Years standing*; forgetting no Circumstance that might aggravate her Guilt, he named to him the very Herbs with which he had furnished her several times to prevent her being discover'd by Pregnancy; and as the most undeniable Proof of his Veracity, he desired *Amintor* to supply his Place, and be convinc'd by Demonstration itself. *Damas* added, 'That being in 'Love with a Farmers Daughter, he wanted Fifty 'Pounds to begin the World with: That knowing 'him to be Generous, and not being able to see any 'longer so much Merit and Constancy abused, he had 'been resolved by opening of his Eyes, to restore him 'to that Quiet, not questioning, but that on his side, '*Amintor* having found the truth of his Story, as a 'Reward, wou'd supply him with the Sum he stood 'in need of. *Amintor* now burning with Rage against the Infernal Hypocrite, promises *Damas* to double the Sum, and consenting to the Cheat, receives all the Instructions that were necessary for his purpose.

By this time *Decio* was come into the Garden, and the two Friends joyning, surprised each other with the different Rencounters they had severally met with. After having a short Consultation, how to expose the execrable *Ephelia*, agreed upon the manner of their Revenge, they went in and mix'd with the Company. The Bride not coming down the Mirth was spoil'd for that Night; and the Guests, who all but *Amintor*, were to lye there, as well as the rest of the Family, were a Bed by Eleven ——

At the appointed time *Amintor* following the Directions of *Damas*, whom he was to personate, is received with open Arms by *Ephelia*, and *Decio*, who all this while had promised *Clotilda* to see her reveng'd before Morning, now discloted the Secret to her; and having roused almost every body in the Family, under pretence that *Ephelia*, who was taken very Ill, wanted their Assistance, opening her Door with his Foot he shew'd them the Lustful and Dissembling Harlot. —— Here I shall break off; For the frightful Confusion of *Ephelia*, and her Mothers piercing Sorrow; the Satisfaction of *Clotilda*, and *Decio's* Pleasure in beholding it; the Indignation of *Amintor*, and the Amazement of the rest, being all equally unspeakable, I shall not spoil with Words such an admirable Scene of different Passions, as can only be conceived by the Strongest Fancies.

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